1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

Ah, but they knew each other. 484

Bayo began paddling faster to keep up with him.

"There is to be a council meeting at Gankwe. I had to 623 975
hurry away last night, and I must get back there in time. We must have permission from the spirit of the dead man to go back to work, and Sedefo has to find out if he can start up the river, and if he does go, we must all pray to the ancestors because four men will be going from Gankwe, and [782] the *Gran Sembe*—the village elders—have things to decide . . . "

Now, fearing that he might have said too much, he doubled his speed, and Bayo understood that the other preferred to be alone. They belonged to different clans, Bayo to the same as the headman of the tribe, and the Gankwe people to another. Gankwe was sending important men to take the Bakra up the river. The chief's own brother, Asikanu, was to go, although it was said he was [684] being sent out of the way while his adultery case was being settled. There had been talk about this case up and down the river. The Gankwe clan head had given a chief's [778] sanctuary to the offender because he was his own brother, people said. Well, if the injured husband committed suicide as he threatened, and sent a kunu to the family of the brother, and even the village and clan, it would be an ugly thing. But so it was with trouble about women. It was as they said,

"*Sleep is death* [538]
Woman kills man."

He half chanted the proverb and smiled, for he looked 831 forward to his trip up the river with an eye to a visit in Lamé, where the women knew how to love. And he began singing the seketi song which he liked so well. Both the melody and the words were old, but he sang the refrain as if it were quite his own—whatever hardships there were on the river, at Lamé one slept with the women!

At the village of Akunkun an old man and a boy of 484 about nine were at the landing place ready to start. Bayo

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

that we walk the Bak'a with pleasure, that he treat us well, that we walk in safety. Thank you."

The men in the other canoes, who had gathered about Sedefo's boat, clapped their hands, as Sedefo had done, and said "Thank you," then took up their paddles.

We had noticed that when Sedefo spoke, Bibifo's lips had moved, as though he were either repeating the prayer, or speaking his own, but when the others joined in the voiced "Gran' tangi!" he was silent.

"Did you pray, Bayo?" we asked. Yes, he had. He had prayed for us, too. Did Bibifo also pray for the white man? But before Bibifo could answer, Bayo laughed aloud.

"Bibifo is *kerki suma*—a church man. Call him Adrian, it will please him. I call him Bibifo, nothing else."

"And you, Bayo?"

"I—you will take me with you to Africa. I want to learn African obia, and come back to the Saramacca, and be a big obia man here on the river."

5

Old Bibifo accepted his great-grandson's jibes with good humor. We were sorry for the old fellow who was so little at ease with the other men, and was so mercilessly twitted by the youngster in the bow.

If the old man were to make a suggestion to him about a channel which Bayo had decided against, then he would turn brazenly, and exclaim, "Massa cow!" This is part of the proverb which says that a man who owns the cow has the best right to say where it shall graze. If Bibifo objected when Bayo attempted to do something that seemed impossible, he would face about smilingly and say, "The power which has raised the monkey from the ground and taught it to live safely in the trees is not dead yet."

"Bibifo," we said, making conversation with the old man, "Why do we go close to the shore?"

"In the center the current is swift and the river deep. When we go in the center, then we use only paddles. It is

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

rapids and large rapids. He carries loads and returns to his own village. But then something happens. His boat is good. He walks *koni*—carefully—but he loses his food, or his entire load, or his boat, or even his life. Something is working against him. It might be *wisi*—bad magic; it might be kunu. If you have kunu, then your enemies can make their bad magic work against you. So it is."

"But what is kunu, Bayo?"

He hesitated.

We assured him that there was no harm in our asking. We had been hearing so much about it, first about Zimbi, and how he had died from a cut with his machete. Now this machete had worked for him since he was a boy, and then he cut himself, and then, having cut himself, he became sick and died. People said down below this was kunu. What did it mean?

But he still hesitated and looked about him until at last when he spoke, he gave the answer we were coming to know so well—"*Massa Gadu sabi*—God knows"—that answer that was the signal that not alone Massa Gadu, but the one who invoked his name in protection against Bakra questions, knew the answer quite well but meant to keep his own counsel. For to talk of these matters is not good, we had been told before by Sedefo.

It was Bibifo who brought up kunu again when Bayo stepped out of the boat for an instant.

"Better not talk to Bayo about kunu, Bakra. There is a very big kunu in Bayo's family. He does not mean to lie to the Bakra when he doesn't talk, but it is better for him not to tell you about it. We Saramacca people say: 'A snake bit me. I see a worm, I am afraid.' Do not ask him more."

2

But the Bush Negro has many sayings, and it was a different proverb from that which Bibifo had quoted to us that guided us in our tortuous course in search of an understanding of kunu.

11 Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

KUNU

"Na wa' taki: Efi gbuli wolo, i sa si san de na ini.—It is said: If a person stirs up a hole, he will find what is in it."

And so it was that very night, when we were camped on an island near the great falls, with the roar of the water sounding in our ears like the very signal drums we were told the river gods wanted sounded that the sun might come and warm and dry them after the long rains, that we learned more. Kasanya, the captain of the fourth boat, had conducted himself so unobtrusively that we barely knew he was there. He was almost as old as Bibifo, but strangely silent. He was tall and spare, with graying hair, and eyes that were rimmed with red. We had not sought him out particularly to make conversation with him because he had ugly, open sores on his body, the result of a virulent case of bush yaws, which showed when he sat paddling in his loin cloth. We had known him during our first year when he had been more willing to be friendly, more ready to talk. From him, in fact, we had learned to play one of the Bush Negro games that the ancestors had brought from Africa.

Kasanya came over to ask us whether we had medicine for him. His head ached so until . . . he could barely see. There is that about white man's medicine in the bush, it is to be had free, and there is no harm in trying it.

"Will you make us a game board like the one we bought from your village last year, Kasanya?" we asked him.

"Yes, but you must have two of them, one flat and one curved like a boat. It is not good to have only one. When a man is alive he plays the game. When he dies and comes back to visit the living, he wants to play, too. Now if there is a board for him, he will play on that. But if there is but the one, he will play with the living and that is not good."

"You know a great deal, Kasanya."

"Awa, yes, but I'm an old man already. I've had much trouble. Last year after you left the third son I made died. Now I have no one. Kunu has taken the three of them, and my wife is asleep, too."

REBEL DESTINY

had seen a hand reach out for the boat, had seen it vanish out of sight. The gods had accepted the offerings. That year the Granman from the city, the white Granman, had to send rice from a far country to feed them, but the next year the crops were good, and all had been well since that time.

"And was that when this shrine was removed to the other island?"

"*M'an sabi. A kan de*—I do not know. It is possible."

2

"When you get to the Mamadam," we had been told by a priestess in the city, "wash your face in the running water, and call on the Mother of the River three times."

Another had said, "If your foot should trip anywhere, be sure to call on your ancestors, but if you should happen to slip at the Mamadam, you must go at once to the river, strike the water three times, and ask the Mother of the River to release your soul. It is a bad thing to lose your soul there."

And our principal story-teller in the city, who was something of a wit, had said: "You both have light eyes. Your hair is not dark. You are not unlike the Bonkoru people who are light, and who, up the river, you will hear called the Toné folk." He was speaking of albinos. "It may be that you have a river god without knowing it. When you come to the Mamadam the spirit may come to you. You may find yourself speaking the tongue that only the Toné people know, and dancing the dances to the river gods, and swimming up the rapids. It will be a fine sight to see you dance to the drums. There was once such a woman. A woman white as you are, you hear? I myself saw her dance. When she danced, she wore red, and put a plug through her lip, and as she danced her color changed. She became black. When the spirit was satisfied, it let her go, and she paled and was a white woman again. I myself saw that woman dance. I saw her grow black while she danced, and saw

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

her become pale again. This may happen to you when you get to the Mamadam."

As he spoke, he began to beat on the table the drum rhythm which calls the river god, and he sang,

"Today, today, O Spirit,
Hard times are upon us
Ingi-o.
Hard times are upon us.
Today, today, Boyo,
Hard times are upon us
Ingi-e."

And then he sang another song, which he said had been sung at the time when black people were running away from slavery, and is still heard at dances to the spirits of the river, the *watra ingi*, as the river gods are called in the city. In it, he called on the agida, the great drum upon which, in town as in the bush, the Negroes call the river gods, and on *Kopsi*, the name of one of the spirits of the water. This time he sang,

"I will play the agida today,
I will knock the agida today-o
Kopsi will foil the magic
Of the crowing cock.
O, I will play the agida today,
I will knock the agida, today-o,
Kopsi will foil the magic,
Of the crowing cock.
I will play the agida today."

3

As we gained the island where the shrine itself stood and looked about us from the high rocks of the sacred spot, there lay before us in the early morning light a scene of inexpressible beauty. At dusk the narrow strips of land which forced the river into three channels had been like dark machetes plunged into the body of the great stream.

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

Chapter VI

THE PROVISION GROUND

I

THE chameleon says: "Haste is all right, but caution is also a good thing."

Bibifo spoke this proverb when we "went aside" with our men to see whether we would accept Chief Fandya's hospitality for that night and the next, that we might see a dance in his village. The rapids above the Mamadam had been difficult, and beyond Baikutu were more rapids. A rest was welcome to Bibifo, and especially a rest at the village of Fandya, where the Granman himself stopped when on his way down the river.

"A man is well here with Fandya," Kasanya said. Though he was not of the same clan as the chief of Baikutu, Fandya's clan was an ally of the Granman, and Fandya himself a man of consequence on the river, not alone in its political life, but, what was more to Kasanya's taste, in matters relating to magic. "For the sake of good broth, you eat the sour dumplings," he said to us, indicating his acquiescence, yet hinting that the men would look for pay for the time they would be forced to remain idle in the village, if we stayed.

But the Gankwe men were for going on. Farther up the river were friendly villages from which several of them had drawn their wives, and farther still their own clan village. Asikanu, speaking for them, said, "Waiting for tomorrow is what caused the toad to remain without a tail. It is still early. The next village is not too far away."

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

Chapter VII

BA ANANSI

I

538 WHETHER it was that our men were thinking of the Kromanti dance at Pa'aba, or whether something in the night itself stirred them, no one thought of going to his hammock. We sat silent for a long time, until our cook suddenly exclaimed, "You know what, Massa, this is a night for stories. Let me make something to drink, and it will be like a wake. We will have a good time."

But Sedefo, who sat nearest to us, was unresponsive. With Bayo and Angita off to the village where obia ruled the dancing, and Bibifo asleep in our boat, there were not enough people about for the proper telling of stories. He was fastidious about such matters, for he was a story-teller of no small reputation on the river.

Yet it was, without doubt, a night for stories, and our town man joined our cook and ourselves in persuading Sedefo to tell the tales which in town and bush recount the exploits of Anansi, the spider. This trickster Anansi in some African mythologies is the creator of the world and, here in Suriname, gives his name to all tales. We were, our boys informed Sedefo, something of story-tellers ourselves, and we had, moreover, learned how to introduce the interludes of song which break up the telling of a tale, and many of the songs as well.

"They know Anansi stories, Sedefo. . . . They can tell many of those we tell in town, and they know those they tell in the Negro country."

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

But Sedefo was still not impressed. 538

"We bush people have our own ways. How will it be with a long story, if the proper songs are not sung?"

So the discussion went on between Sedefo and the town boys, until among them they had gone over all the many details of how stories must be told. There was the interchange between the teller and his audience at the very beginning. Openings might differ. Here in the bush, one way was for the teller to cry "Mato!" and someone in his audience to call back "Tongoni!" What did this mean? It was a way to begin. That is how it was done long ago in the land of the Negroes. Did we not know that? Or the teller might begin with "Hireti!" and then the answer would be "Daieti!" But often, as well, the opening might be "Kri! Kra!" Sometimes, though now it was most often a way of beginning stories for children, the tale would be started with "Er tin tin," and the answer to this "Tin tin tin," in the manner of "Once upon a time."

What really mattered, however, was the way in which the intervals in the story-telling were dramatized. After the speaker had started his tale and had carried it to some incident where he paused for a moment, he would be interrupted by a call from someone in his audience, "Kri, kra!" His answer would come promptly, "What have you to say?"

"I myself was there," would be the response, and this would draw its question.

"What did you see?"

At this point, the person who had interrupted would 538 533
begin a song, and its chorus would be taken up by all who were listening. And when it was ended, the leader of the song would shout, "Go on with your story, my man!"

Now the telling would be resumed, but only for two or three minutes, when again a voice would call out, "Bato! I was there, too!" And without further colloquy another song would begin. This was the way stories should be told, and when people knew what they were about, then they might change the words of old songs and make up new ones

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-8 (1928-1929) 1834
SRF Bush Negroes SRF
Saramacca

538 to fit the story that was being recited, or they knew the
533 songs that, as long as anyone could remember, had been sung at given intervals in a particular tale, and which themselves carried the action forward.

538 But Sedefo and our boys spoke not only of how a tale is opened and carried forward, but of the many ways of bringing a story to a close. A song might furnish a proper ending, or a proverb. "The reward for goodness is the cudgel," they agreed, might well end some of the stories about Anansi's exploits, or, "When you wish to eat with the devil, you must have a long fork." Or, "He who doesn't believe a lie, won't believe the truth," would sometimes be fitting, and "All showing of teeth isn't a grin." There was also the ending in which the teller vouched for his participation in the concluding events of his tale, as when he would say, "Bato! I myself sat with the King at his feast!"

But now our cook, whose patience was tried by this discussion, began to riddle.

"Mato!"

"Tongoni!"

"You have three things in your house," he started, looking about him at Sedefo and us, and at Kasanya, who had fallen asleep, and Asikanu, who sat in the doorway watching the younger woman. "One of them longs for daybreak. One of them longs for night. One of them longs for the world to come to an end. *Suma sa puru?*—Who will pull the riddle?"

Asikanu finally broke the silence.

"The first is a bed. It longs for daylight. The second is a stool. It is tired. It longs for night to come that it may rest. The third is a clock. It is weary of life. It wishes the world would come to an end."

And so a beginning was made. Sedefo turned to the cook.

"Friend," he said, "You tell a story. And then I will tell one for the Bak'a."

Our cook began: "Kri! Kra! All men in their places!"

Back came the answer, "Will it go?"

Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1929-1930) 1934
SR Bush Negroes SR
Saramacca

bush for some months, and when he came back he did not feel well, and they quarreled often. When they quarreled she refused to cook for him, and so he said bad things to her. He began to say the child was not his. Now when a father takes away his 'kra, his soul, from the child while it is in the mother's womb, it is not good. When the child was born, it was a very small child. Afterwards the man left the woman. He still said the child was not his, but he used to bring money to the woman sometimes to buy things for the child. The neighbors said she must not take the money. If she took it, they said, the child would die of fio-fio. But the woman took the money. Nowadays many of them don't believe in the old things, until they find out. When the child was four months old it died. Everybody knew it was fio-fio."

He told other incidents of what happened to people who had fio-fio.

"I tell you all this because sometimes the men in the boats talk about the whites, and they think you don't understand. But you know what they say, and you are angry. If you give them a present of leaf tobacco later, or rum, then they or you may become sick. . . . The men in the bush know what to do about fio-fio, Massa, and you must learn, too. The proverb says: 'How is a boat to go, if it has no paddles?'"

3

At the entrance to the village of S'ei a gigantic silk-cotton tree stood. Its trunk was massive, and the roots which projected outwards like so many buttresses made of it a great somber cathedral. The curiously twisted grooves which these buttresses made were said to house many spirits, and particularly the three who lived in the kankan tree, as the natives called it. Gedeonsu, the male god, and Tinné, his wife, lived there with their child Dyombie, the most dreaded of them all. The kankan tree gods were thought of as women's gods, though a few men might be found, here and there, who would, on occasion,

GRANMAN MOANA YANKUSO

"Granman Yankuso is the tallest man on the river, and the darkest," they said. "He speaks little. When he is angry, his growl strikes terror in all who hear him."

People said, "The Granman is a clever man. You can tell him about your work in the way you would speak to your own educated men, and he will understand you."

"They will take away everything you have up there on the river."

"They will never bring you to the Granman. He will see to it."

In the villages of the Saramacca country we heard again and again proverbs he had originated, which were quoted when men told of this almost mythical personality.

"The Granman says, 'No one must die, but the burial place cannot lie idle,'" Bayo once quoted him.

"What does it mean, Bayo?"

"It is deep, white man. The Granman is wise."

Kasanya once quoted another of the Granman's proverbs. "If the gods say take one step at a time, do not stand still, and take two steps the next time in anger."

On this river they told us that Granman Moana Yankuso knew all that went on. It was a kind of magic he had: whatever men did anywhere, he knew.

And they said, too, that men were afraid to cross him, not alone because of his rank, but because his spirits were strong.

3

It is difficult to be objective about Moana Yankuso. In the terms his own people use, the explanation of his personality would be the explanation given of any other.

"He has strong gods."

If we urged them to explain what were the gods of a man they were praising, they would describe the Tiger spirit the man had, and what knowledge of healing and future events his Opete obia, his buzzard spirit, gave him, and how he had come by a special obia which had passed down to him from a famous magician of the earliest times.

M.Herskovits & Herskovits E-8 (1928-1929) 1934
[illegible] Bush Negroes [illegible]
Saramacca

REBEL DESTINY

643
159

In our own terms, if we were to picture the Granman as a splendid savage, cheerful, guileless, childlike, flattered by our interest, we would be belying his gifts of sophistication, and he would thank us little for these romantic outlines which, according to the values of his own civilization, would be insulting.

829
[538]
796

The code of life among these people was expressed in the proverb we had heard often spoken. "There are men on the upper river, there are men on the lower river, too." For survival in this bush, a man needed to match his strength and his wits and his magic, his kindliness and his enmity against those of any other. And the Bush Negro is a realist, for, as we had seen, not even the gods could be depended upon to be consistent—consistently good or consistently evil. The Bush Negro's gods, like humans, often did things for unaccountable reasons, because of a momentary whim, because of a desire to try the untried.

829
181

It was good to be guileless, but sometimes a man had to be a tiger, had to stalk his prey from behind. It was well enough to be a tiger, but sometimes a man needed the cunning of the bush hero, spider Anansi, who knew how to outwit the tiger. It was well enough to be an eagle, and be free and fly high, but sometimes a man needed the wit of the little bird konubri, who became king of all birds, because, when in the kingdom of birds there was a contest for the throne, it was he who, by perching on the back of the eagle, flew highest of all.

643
159

In the simplest of our own terms, Granman Moana Yankuso could be said to be a superb politician. In his villages, marriage alliances were calculated with the nicety of the best statesmanship. Whatever his own views, he saw to it that he never defied the arbiters of magic or the clan of the seat of magic, the Dahomey people. Toward the women of strange villages who came to see the white man and his woman, he showed an easy gallantry, which could not have been but flattering. When addressing the women who carried children astride their backs, he would speak gently to them and call them "mother" in greeting, and

Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

643
684
574
[576]

fine, sat between Sedefo, whose bench was moved forward a little, and Angita. The younger men sat with bodies half-turned toward the wall, out of respect for the Granman, the older ones, with their faces averted from him.

The Granman was speaking, telling a story.

643
684
538

"Ai, mati . . . " he said, in his precise, formal way, laying stress on each syllable, "in our bush, the gods be praised, men are men. There was a man near here, who saw a woman he liked, and he took her. He had a loving eye, he was young. Ai, mati, what is a beating to a man when he is young? But the proverb says, 'All that is in the darkness will come to light.' Dealings with women always come to light too soon. That man got a beating, mati! He came out into the clearing, his head held high, like any man whom young girls follow with their eyes. But waiting for him was the husband of the woman, and the men of his family, and. . . . "

"Well, so it is, G'ama'," said Sedefo, with the careful modulation which showed that he, too, was schooled in the way of the important councils.

"Ya-hai, G'ama'," said Asikanu, more briefly.

Granman Yankuso now went on with his story, bringing to his recital all the detail of the punishment of the adulterer, without quickening the telling of his story even when he spoke the words which described the sound of the blows.

"Yes, master of the realm," said Sedefo, his head still averted, but leaning his body forward a little as he spoke, so that he somewhat shielded Asikanu from the direct gaze of the Granman, yet managing this clever gesture so that it had the air of rapt interest.

"Kere-kere, G'ama'," Asikanu breathed, almost inaudibly.

As the Granman recounted his tale, Asikanu's spine twitched as though every blow mentioned was that instant being leveled at him, as though he himself were lying head down in the dust of the clearing, while blows rained down upon him, and the Kromanti iron bands cut gashes into his proud face and arms and body.

11 Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SRS Bush Negroes SRS
Saramacca

But Sedefo, splendid actor that he was, betrayed in no way that he was aware of his friend's discomfiture, except that his interpolations became more and more spirited, balancing in the intensity of his voice the formality of the Granman's speech.

"True, true!" he said, with excitement.

"By Ando, G'ama'!"

When the tale was finished, the Granman became reminiscent. In his youth he had been like the rest. What did it mean to be a man and not to assert one's manhood when a handsome woman was to be had? He was on the Marowyne then. Did they want to beat him? He had said, "Very well." As many as wished could come at him—but one at a time.

As he spoke now, he clenched his fist and struck the table with it so that the table shook and the guns which lay underneath it rattled.

He was no longer young, but his answer to people who threatened would still be the same, he continued.

"Tell them that everywhere on the river, mati," he finished with a smile, and he cleared his throat as a signal for the bassia to come and pour out drinks for his visitors, before they left his village.

And how was their clan head who had been ailing? he asked, with friendly solicitude.

5

Granman Yankuso was telling about his great ancestors.

He looked particularly well that night. His smock-like coat was a deep blue, and over it was a print of orange and black worn toga fashion.

There was Bagida, one of the first to escape to the bush, and Dosi who made the Kasito clan, and Ajako who was a Matchau Negro, a man of the Granman's own clan, and it was he who had fought against the whites and had freed his people. There were Mother Bedu, and Mother Fakia, and the great Abini family which bore Alabi, whom the peccary had helped to freedom, so that Alabi's people, the Awana Negroes, to this day did not eat pingo.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

538 The Djukas possess, in common with many other primitive tribes, a number of trickster stories. They are called *anansi-stories*, and are usually concerned with the adventures of a clever spider, who outwits all the other animals. They resemble closely the Br'er Rabbit tales of the Negro of the [171] southern United States. These are West African themes, and can be found not only in the Carolinas and in Surinam, but scattered also throughout the West Indies. In the middle of the last century a collection of these stories was made among the Town Negroes of Paramaribo.

173 As most primitives possess no writing materials or technique, their knowledge is necessarily passed on by word of mouth, which imposes a severe limitation upon its possible extent. History, for the Djukas, starts with the rebellion, and of what came before they know little and care less. If they have stories of the Creation, we did not hear them. One approach to written language is in the Aucaner nation, where 212 a few rudimentary symbols are carved on paddles or other implements, a form of symbol-writing (see Appendix B). [145] The implement is given to someone as a token of affection, the symbols constituting a greeting. Some of them may be seen in the illustrations of small paddles and pot-stirrers.

202 For communicating over a long distance, the Djukas use [177] a system of drum telegraphy. This they have brought over from their West African homeland. At the town of Biodoti the news of our expedition was sent upriver by being drummed out on a tomtom. Squatting over the reverberating *apenti*, the Djuka buck rapped out the peculiar rhythm that

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

torchlight. The Djukas have a rodent trap that is a direct African survival, found on both the West and East Coasts of Africa.

Stedman mentions in his *Narrative* that the Bush Negro rebels used a kind of conch-shell trumpet to call their people to arms. The same species of trumpet is still to be found among the Djukas, and is similar in type to those found on the Gold Coast. The nose flute used by the Bush Negroes also comes from the Congo region of Africa. Wooden trumpets like those used by the Bush Negroes are found also along the Gold Coast and in the Congo country.

The drums form perhaps the clearest and most characteristic West African survival. They are not at all like the Indian drums of the same region, which are flat and more like a tambourine. The Djuka manner of constructing them from a hollowed-out log, with skin stretched over the opening and thonged over pegs, is commonly in use among innumerable African tribes. The tuning of them by hammering on the pegs, set at an angle, is also a detail from Africa. The use of drums for communication over long distances, and the development of an elaborate code of drum signals, is developed to a high degree among West African tribes. Rattray, in his study of the Ashanti people, gives an extended description of this.

The *anansi-tories*, the spider stories, ubiquitous in the West Indies, are also found among the Tshi-speaking peoples of the West Coast. The use of white clay for smearing ceremonial objects and amulets is African. The decoration of

/16 cont./

868 The children learn their dances and games at a very early
858 age and are always present at the festivals.

867 From earliest youth on they are taught to respect and
689 venerate older persons; offenses against this obligatory respect are severely punished.

868 The boys in particular are taken along to the forest at an early age and remain there in connection with the processing of wood or other operations, as well as for hunting and fishing, and very quickly learn to swim.

515 Men, women, and children bathe separately in the river every day.

Chapter XI

Burial Services and Other Ceremonies

764 They celebrate the burial services with great solemnity. If one of them dies in Auca, that is, their land, then the corpse is cleaned, the nails are cut, and it is placed in a coffin, in which various and especially costly articles of clothing of the deceased are placed and to which all the relatives also add a new piece of cloth (usually blankets and pantjes) as remembrances, a farewell token on which much value is placed. Hence they always take care to have a sufficient stock of new and unused cloths.

Ordinarily the corpse lies in the open coffin for one day before the interment takes place, in order to bid it farewell. The relatives then sit around the coffin and weep ceaselessly /17/ in a mostly singsong manner peculiar to them, in which the visitors also join from time to time.

765 After the interment the closest blood relatives proceed to hold the days of mourning on a mat spread out on the ground for
[538] eight days. During this time they weep loudly by turns, at the same time making the strangest gestures, while day and night, generally by turns, little stories with many allusions, and always ending with a moral solution, are told.

/17 cont./

765 In these tales, called anansitori (spider-head story), the
[538] spider usually plays the main role as a personal being.

The close female relatives wear as a sign of mourning for husband, father, and mother, for a year, white or blue cloths around the head and a white cloth around the body. The men wear a white cloth around head and body only for three months, but during an entire year (since they then may not go completely clothed) they cover themselves with only a black loincloth. They also refrain from wearing ornaments for a whole year.

766 If one of them dies in the working place, in the town, or elsewhere, then the corpse has some hair shorn from its forehead and is subsequently buried without ceremonies. This hair is wrapped in a new piece of linen or cotton and brought to Auca, or their permanent dwelling place, where it then undergoes a proper burial, on which occasion all the customary ceremonies are observed as though the corpse were there.

766 Whenever one of them dies suddenly or from a strange
787 disease, which can arouse a suspicion of poisoning, immediately
[824] after death and before being washed the corpse is placed in a boesipapaja (1) tree (which, split and then tied together, is just

> 1. It is a hollow tree of very soft and unusable wood which, when split open, resembles bamboo from the inside; the leaves are broad and rasp-like.

like a halved hollow tree) at least five feet long. This kind of coffin is carried from east to west, past all those present, who for this purpose must be ranged in two rows, by two completely strange and impartial men, who are invited from other places for this purpose.

Now the place where the corpse through heavy pressure on the /18/ head forces the two bearers to stand still is where the inquiry begins, and one asks the corpse whether this place where they are now standing still is where clarification can be provided. If one notices a distinct movement of the hollowed-out tree, this is corroboration. If, after the question has been repeated three

/22 cont./

123 As a White one must enjoy great confidence among them if one wants to obtain permission to witness such solemnities. Never shall I forget the spectacle when I was present at such a festival; it took place from seven o'clock in the evening until two o'clock in the morning. During all this time I found myself in a very unpleasant state of tension. Although I found myself far from the part inhabited by us (namely the town of Paramaribo) in the deep forest alone in their midst, I was nevertheless not afraid because of my positive conviction of my influence over them. I was not at ease that night, however, and were it not for the fact that I did not want to hinder them or show them that I did not feel at ease at this solemnity, I would have departed, however eager I was to see the result of the movements. I remained, however, until all had come to an end, both for the distinction that fell to me for /23/ having been allowed to be present there and in order not to offend the trust put in me, while to myself I rejoiced at being able later to give to others the description of this solemnity.

Chapter XIV

Language, Odo, and Narratives (1)

• 538 1. Odo, proverb; narratives are called fori, and tales anansi-tori.

197 Their language is the Negro English customarily spoken here, but in a singsong tone with a peculiar accent.

195 As proof that during the conversation they understand you well, they constantly repeat "Yaa!"

551 When a child is born among them, aside from a general name they also give it a day name, in which for them special meanings are concealed, for instance:

/23 cont./

551 The boys born on Sunday Kwassie; the girls Kwassiba.
" " " " Monday Kodjo; " " Adjuba.
" " " " Tuesday Kwamina; " " Abenie.
" " " " Wednesday Kwakoe; " " Akoeba.
" " " " Thursday Jauw; " " Jaba.
" " " " Friday Kofi; " " Afie.
" " " " Saturday Kwami; " " Amba.

538 Their odo or proverbs as a rule have reference to their simple bush life, for instance:

539 "Te pikien boessi kiebrie joe boen, dan joe no moesoe falla biegie boessi te joe toeka naka hen"; that is,

"If you are protected by a small bush, be content with it and do not demand the bigger one that you may happen to see."

Another meaning is:

"If the little suffices, then do not strive for the greater."

"Na srefie avie die de falla pikien bon, de falla bigie wantoe"; that is,

"The ax that cuts down little trees also cuts down big trees."

Another meaning is:

"God, who does not forsake the worm, will not forsake a man either," or:

/24/ "Nobody is so unhappy but that days of good luck come for him"; also:

"Regard your enemy not too lightly."

Chapter XV

General Knowledge

824 This is on a very low level among them and is confined mainly to a thorough knowledge of varieties of wood and medicinal herbs in use among them.

/173 cont./

764 Broko dɛ. The eighth day after death, a ceremony called broko dɛ takes place, not to be confused with the lifting of mourning. This ceremony marks the end of the burial rites proper; when it is ended, the dead person can no longer be questioned directly; the period of mourning begins.

[613] It is a very simple ceremony which attracts few people and happens almost entirely within the lineage.

[538] At nightfall they begin to relate Anansi toli, those traditional tales which make the audience vibrate together and [535] create a special atmosphere. Then come the sɔ̃nge, susa, and awasa dances which last all night.

764 769 The next day each one busies himself at small jobs in the village while the women prepare the meal. This is the ceremony called towɛ nyã, which takes place at the edge of the mortuary shed about four o'clock in the afternoon. Each woman of the lineage brings a large bowl of rice and a small bowl containing either a piece of meat cooked in sauce or some fish. The oldest man of the lineage has large banana leaves spread out on the ground at the edge of the shed; he takes a little of each dish and puts it down on the leaves, while at the same time addressing the ancestors in ordinary language in the tone of an intimate conversation: "Dead of the family, come, come to eat today."

That lasts perhaps a quarter of an hour, while those present are seated, immobile and meditative. The ancestors are supposed to eat the spiritual part of the food -- kaaka fu nyã.

Then the elders line up at the edge of the shed five or six small children of about ten years, each one of whom holds a basin upside down. A man keeps them in line /174/ with the aid of a long stick. Then, at a signal, he lifts the stick and the children dash headlong with laughs and shouts toward the ancestors' portion, each one carrying away all he could cover [613] with his basin. The ceremony terminates with a joyful meal eaten together by the whole lineage, symbol of the communion between the dead and the living.

/180 cont./

765 are divided up equally among all the inhabitants of the village. But if the dead person had near relatives in the village, children, nephews, or brothers, it is they who stand the main burden.

[613] Members of the dead person's lineage who are settled in other villages contribute equally to the expenses and the organizing of the festival, but in a symbolic fashion. /181/

[623] A council (kuutu) of the village inhabitants sets the date; during the two weeks preceding each one is busy. The women 765 hull and winnow rice, prepare great quantities of couac and 262 sugar-cane juice. The busimã scour the bush and have meat and fish smoked. Each one, according to his means, buys tafia, sugar, chocolate, and other articles of food liked by the Refugee Blacks.

765 The celebration of the rites occupies a whole week. This 775 is because, the Refugee Blacks think the influence of the dead person can be eliminated only progressively by the repetition of the rite of separation.

The first day, the yɔrka of the dead person whose mourning is going to be lifted is called by formulas beaten on the [535] apinti drum. Then possession dances take place.

765 The second day is reserved for the material preparation for the ceremonies to follow.

[613] The third day, the spouse in mourning, if there is one, is conducted by the members of the dead person's lineage under [822] the mortuary shed. He is dressed in red and is congratulated for having kept the mourning well. Then he is led to the river, [783] and old women of the dead person's lineage begin to bathe him [775] while adjuring the yɔrka to part company with him.

The fourth day at nightfall, all those present assemble [538] at the mortuary shed. They recite tales (Anãsi tɔli), [781] improvisations (mato), and riddles (ɔdo). This phase of the festival has as its object the concentrating of the attention of the hearers; it creates a warm, collective atmosphere which impregnates those present, bringing to them intense and highly colored emotions.

/185 cont./

765 538 About eight o'clock in the evening, people assemble around the mortuary shed where the drummers and mato (Anansi Toli) storytellers sit. Amèmbé, of Loka village, begins to tell a story which is scarcely listened to, the audience remaining noisy and distracted. The respondents punctuate his discourse with approbations: "hiya ba! na so!" [522] At several passages of the story (when Anansi has succeeded in deceiving his victim), the audience shakes with laughter, the drums beat, the storyteller and his respondents sing and dance. Little by little the audience warms up, participates intensely in the story.

Another tale follows, told by Adiiso, head of the Dju lineage (Asisi). [535] The audience is overexcited, the interludes of dancing become more and more numerous and longer, everybody, men, women, and children take part in it.

765 About eleven o'clock the dances are going to begin in the order susa, sɔ̃ŋgɛ, awasa; at six /186/ o'clock in the morning [535] the next day the awasa dances are carried on. Part of those present go down to the wharf to go home, showing no apparent fatigue.

Fifth day, Nov. 12. Nothing happens in the morning. The people take some rest.

At 3:00 P.M. the young men go around dressed up to the nines; people visit each other from one house to the other, they drink and sing.

765 262 264 About 3:30 the basia circulate in the village, calling the women to bring the ceremonial meal. Tables are set out under the shed. The women each bring a big bowl or basin of cooked rice (about two kilograms of rice). Some add a bowl of sauce or cooked fish. No meat.

The basia lay out all that on the tables. There are about 30 bowls or basins (which represents a handsome effort, the rice harvest having been bad), about 50 bottles of soda, several boxes of pastries /biscuits/ and Dutch cheeses.

/265 cont./

796 769 539 "Great ancestors who are in God's country, it is you who have the strength of the village."

(The tafia gushes forth.)

"Drink, drink, but do not get drunk to the point of being deluded, look with favor upon the righteous, scatter the wicked."

796 782 Next, Fintiman goes off to make an offering of tafia accompanied by a few words at the chapel of Odun. Then he goes to the edge of the mortuary shed to pour water, tafia, and coffee on behalf of Samalobi, the grand man's brother, for whom mourning has not been lifted.

He goes next to the house of the deceased [redacted] man Awensay to make an offering of coffee (Awensay, like the other grand men, used to drink coffee).

796 782 829 The prayer of the preceding year (January 1, 1957), presided over by grandfather Samalobi, had had a higher inspiration. After praying in about the same terms as above for the Boni, they prayed for the Djuka, explaining that in days gone by Boni and Djuka had fought, but that all that was forgotten. They prayed next for the Saramaka, then for the Indians, finally for the Europeans. I asked why; they answered: "It is because the Europeans were the ones who brought us to this country which has become ours." /p. 266 is blank/

/267/

CHAPTER VIII

538 765

TALES -- PROVERBS

Tales (Anãsi tɔli) and Proverbs (ɔdo) retain an important social function among the Refugee Blacks. It is always by tales that the great customary ceremonies of the lifting of mourning begin. Their function is to concentrate the attention of the

538 /267 cont./
[765] audience and to create an atmosphere of participation in the rite.

This ritual character makes it so that the Anansi Toli cannot be recited any time and in any old way. The story-teller may speak only at night, in the presence of a respondent and of an audience of at least two or three persons. A ritual formula: "dirinti" -- the response of the audience: "ndaeti," precedes each new story. It is only with extreme repugnance that informants consent to listen to and comment in the daytime on a tale recorded on tape, particularly if their parents are still living, for it is said among the Refugee Blacks as in Black Africa that telling stories in full daylight makes one's father and mother die.

[124] [126] [761]

These tales belong to an authentically African accumulated store, practically unchanged in spite of the borrowing from the Creole Blacks of Paramaribo of several themes concerning automobiles, steamboats, etc., inserted in droll fashion into the traditional themes.

[104] [107]

The usual hero of these tales is Anansi, the crafty one. Anansi is the name of the Mygale spider (1). It is noteworthy,

[825]

[171]

1. The spider cycle is characteristic of the Akan (Agni-Baoulé-Abron) culture area. Anansi is the name of the Mygale spider among the Agni.

however, that this spider does not appear to play any special role in the beliefs of the Refugee Blacks and that no divinatory power is attributed to it. In fact, in the tales of which he is the hero, Anansi is nearly always represented as a man.

538 /2.7 cont./

Habitually figure in these tales:

Wénon	Anansi's wife
Akpwatitikwati Asingébelé Panikitapu Bigimofu	his sons

Saniasêmooyu, his daughter.

(825) /268/ Also included under the title of Anansi Toli are tales in which only animals appear: leu, the elephant (whose description the Refugee Blacks have kept through oral tradition), kɔ̃gkoni, the agouti (1), who knows everything that happens

1. Rodent the size of a rabbit.

in the bush, kariaku, the deer, a sly old blade who thwarts all tricks (2).

2. It is strange to see this animal play the role of the fox of our fables; the deer easily escapes the hunter thanks to his acute vision, but he does not really have intelligence.

The tales transcribed below are 14 in number; they have been chosen from about 30 and represent the most characteristic themes as well as the best-constructed narratives.

About half of the tales of the Refugee Blacks turn upon two fundamental themes:

--Hunting ruses, whereby Anansi succeeds in killing all the animals of the bush except one who, cleverer than he, succeeds in turning the trick and killing him in turn;

/268 cont./

• 538 --Deception, more particularly associated with gluttony; in many tales, complicated ruses have for their purpose eating the neighbor's share.

Half the tales are improvisations on extremely varied themes and are impossible to classify. A large proportion are fantastic stories, disconnected and incoherent, recalling the progress of dreams. We have given no room here to this type of tale which in fact presents little of sociological interest.

[83] The Anansi Toli never have a licentious character.

In a general way, the tales of the Refugee Blacks do not reflect any definite concept. The same character is represented from one tale to another in contradictory aspects; he has no fixed personality. For example, the character Anansi, generally represented as lying, thieving, jealous, greedy, and cruel, is not associated with any definite concept. Some tales show him bringing Death among men, but others show him humiliating, to the great joy of men, the maleficent goddesses of the water and the bush. Most of the tales represent him as a swindler, but in some he figures as a judge. These contradictions are not perceived by the Refugee Blacks.

The storyteller himself succeeds with difficulty in following the thread of his story, losing himself in details, often recounted with wit. Sometimes the theme turns aside completely in the course of the narrative, like the ornamental motifs of the Refugee Blacks in which human limbs end in volutes, giving a harmonious whole but without great meaning. In this respect there is a great difference from one storyteller to the other. Certain ones construct more highly organized narratives; most are satisfied with the incoherent and fantastic tales.

/269/

•538 Doubtless for the same reason, nothing is found in most of these tales which brings to mind a moral inspired by a concept of good and evil. Now it is the thief and the swindler who triumph, now they find one cleverer than they. It is easy to see that for the storyteller all that is on the same plane; he simply guided his story on what seemed to him most amusing.
[522] As for the audience, it always laughs at the loser. One single tale out of 14 (No. 1) expresses a practical moral: "That is why you must not deceive people, for there are people who are cleverer than you."

Most of the tales and proverbs have already been heard many a time by the Refugee Blacks without that lessening their pleasure. More than the story itself, they appreciate the verve of the storyteller, his mimicking talent, the always new variations he knows how to give of a hackneyed theme.

538 All these tales were recorded with the tape recorder and
128 then were studied carefully with respect to vocabulary and syn-
[126] tax. We have stayed very close to the actual wording and as far as possible have kept the special Aluku turns of phrase, especially African interjections which reinforce the verbs. The tedious passages which had to be summarized are put in parentheses. Tales nos. ten to 14 are summarized.

#539

Tales

1) The Bearded Rock

One day Anansi went into the bush. He walked until ... he saw a rock, a rock with a beard. He cried: "Bearded rock!"

/273 cont./

*539 my belly," come and cut its bark, have me drink an infusion of it to calm my pains. My belly likes to play these tricks on me." They walked a little more. The bat said: "I am going to step aside for a moment." It stepped aside, then ran noiselessly to the tree, cut a piece of bark, put it in its bag, and came back.

They arrived at the village. The people had set the table; a big table! As they were getting ready to eat, Anansi moaned: "My belly, my belly. Please, that bark I spoke to thee about, go and get me some (3)."

• [538]

3. This complicated ruse is to get his comrade away in order to eat its portion. This is the central theme of a whole cycle of tales of the Refugee Blacks.

The bat pulled it out of its bag: "Here it is." Anansi said to himself: "There are some people who must not be involved in one's affairs." They ate until they had finished; they danced until dawn. As they were taking their leave, the people made them a gift of a bag /274/ of groundnuts, comrades, a big bag; it was not a one-quintal bag, but a two-quintal bag.

Anansi said to the bat: "Thou art not able to carry this bag. I am the elder, it is up to me to carry it." He lifted it; he wavered (under the weight) but stuck to it just the same. They walked. Anansi was going first, the bat behind. The bat flew, pou, pou, pou! dropped on the road and changed itself into a golden fork. Anansi arrived. He said: "Here is a golden fork, I am going to take it." He stretched out his hand as if to take it. He said to himself: "Hou? I must not take it, it is the bat." He cut a stick and struck it, gbo! He walked, walked. The bat flew ahead, pou, pou, pou! It dropped on the

/274 cont./
*539 (He fell), he stayed there, bashed in like an old kerosene can. He didn't die of it. He came to and went away. So goes the tale.

5) Anansi, the King and the Rabbit(3).

3. The rabbit, who plays the part of the sly character in the folklore of the West Indies, does not exist in Guiana. This tale is probably the transposition of a West Indian theme.

• [538] [177]

There was a king; he reigned over a country. All the people of the king's village had the habit of going to wash in a certain pond. One day, the king went to this pond to bathe. Comrade, he saw a cack in the water! "Who relieved himself there?" "I don't know." /275/ The king called the people together. This one said: "It isn't I." That one: "It isn't I." Nobody had made that cack, but there it was.

Anansi said to the king: "Grand-man, I shall discover the guilty one." The king said: "Very well; do what thou canst do."

Anansi went away. He went and cut a tree; he made a beautiful big statue, he made it eyes, a nose, a mouth, breasts. He smeared it with birdlime, then put it in the middle of the path which went to the pond. The moon had not risen.

Comrades, the rabbit relieved himself in the pond, then he came back to the bank, for it was he who had made that cack in the water. He took to the road, a pail of water on his head. He saw a woman standing in the middle of the path. He shouted: "Ho! woman! get off the path, I don't want thee (here)." She remained immobile. He said: "Woman! I am